

Oral History Program
California State University, Sacramento, California

Oral History Interview

with

YOSHIRO WILLIAM MATSUHARA

November 6 & 13, 1990
Sacramento, California

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JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

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PREFACE

In the summer of 1987, a small group of people from the Florin JACL met at Mary and Al Tsukamoto's home to plan a new project for the organization. Because of the unique history of Florin, we felt that there were special stories that needed to be preserved. The town of Florin, California was once a thriving farming community with a large Japanese American population. The World War II internment of persons of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast, devastated the town and it never recovered. Today there is no town of Florin; it has been merged into the larger county of Sacramento. Many Japanese Americans who reside throughout the United States, however, have their origins from Florin, or have relatives and friends who once had ties to this community. The town may no longer exist, but the spirit of the community continues to survive in people's hearts and memories.

Several hours have been devoted to interviewing former Florin residents. The focus of the interviews was on the forced internment and life in the relocation camps, but our questions touched on other issues. We asked about their immigration to the United States from Japan, pre-war experiences, resettlement after the war and personal philosophies. We also wanted to record the stories of the people left behind. They were friends and neighbors who watched in anguish as the trains transported the community away.

We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their 70's, 80's and 90's. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness.

We owe special thanks to James F. Carlson, former Assistant Dean of American River College and to Jackie Reinier, former Director of the Oral History Program at California State University in Sacramento. Without their enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise, we never could have produced this collection of oral histories. We also wish to acknowledge the project members, volunteers, the Florin JACL which contributed financial support, Sumitomo Bank for their corporate donation, and the Taisho Young Mens Association which contributed some of their assets as they dissolved their corporation on December 31, 1991.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Mr. Matsuhara gave interviews on November 6th and November 13th, 1990 at his home in Sacramento, California. The interviews were conducted in the Matsuhara living room by Donald B. Walker, a Public History graduate student at California State University, Sacramento. The edited text was prepared jointly by Mr. Matsuhara and the interviewer. Matsuhara edited the text of Tapes 1 & 2 between November 20th and November 27th; he edited the text of Tapes 3 and 4 between November 27th and December 4th, 1990. The tapes, edited tape transcript, release form, and biography questionnaire are on deposit at the Library Archives, The Library, California State University, Sacramento.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Yoshiro William Matsuura was born in Sacramento, California on November 21, 1921. His father, Otokichi Matsuura, and his mother, Riye (Ono) Matsuura, were born in *Hakayama-ken*, Japan.

Matsuura was the fourth of four sons. His older brothers' names are Isamu Jim (b. 1912), Toshio Harry (b. 1913), and Saburo Howard (b. 1919). His two younger sisters' names are Toshiko (b. 1926), and Yoko Alice (1928-81).

Matsuura attended public schools and Japanese language school in Sacramento. He is a 1939 graduate of Sacramento High School. During his school years, Matsuura played on a championship *Nisei* League basketball team. Following graduation, he majored in accounting at Sacramento Junior College from 1939 to 1941.

Matsuura was removed by the United States' government, with his parents, sisters, and brother Howard, to Walerga Assembly Center, near Sacramento, in 1942. Later, they were interned at Tule Lake Internment Center in northern California. In 1943, Matsuura enlisted in the U.S. Army. He volunteered for the Military Intelligence Service and was sent to the MIS Language School at Ft. Savage, Minnesota. Upon completion of a nine month training program, Matsuura was sent, in late 1944, to the Philippine Islands, where he assisted in prisoner interrogation. He

served on Okinawa and later acted as a translator during the early months of the Occupation of Japan.

Matsuhabra returned to Sacramento in May 1946. He married Pearl Masuda of Sacramento in April 1947. They have three children: a daughter, Colleen (b. 1950); and two sons, Kevin (b. 1953), and Michael (b. 1957).

Matsuhabra worked for the California Youth Authority from 1949 to 1954. He was a Senior Deputy Probation Officer with the Sacramento County Probation Department from 1954 to 1981. While employed by the California Youth Authority, Matsuhabra earned a B.A. degree in Correctional Work Administration at Sacramento State College.

Matsuhabra is a member of the VFW *Nisei* Post 8985, the Japanese American Citizen's League, and the Parkview Presbyterian Church. His hobbies include social dancing and basketball.

[Session 1, November 6, 1990]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

WALKER: Let's begin at the beginning. Tell me about your parents.

MATSUHARA: My father's name is Otokichi Matsuhsara, and he was born in Wakayama-ken, Japan, on April 1, 1879. My mother's name is Riye Ono, and she was born in Kirime, Wakayama-ken, Japan, on December 6, 1891.

My father--I assume--came to the United States by himself, initially, prior to 1903, because I recall that he mentioned about being involved in the earthquake in San Francisco in 1906. He went back to Japan--and either he was married prior to the time he came to the United States, or he got married after he returned to Japan--and then both my dad and my mother came back to the United States at San Francisco, in about June of 1911.

My dad passed away on January 27, 1956, at the age of seventy seven years, as the result of a heart condition. My mother passed away here in Sacramento,

MATSUHARA: on December 9, 1969, at the age of 78 years, because of cancer.

My dad worked primarily as a farmer. Because of his heart condition, he was unable to work for years and years. As a matter of fact, I think I was still in my early teens when he was unable to work, and my mother generally supported the family working seasonally at the local cannery (the California Packing Corporation). The children in the family kind of supplemented the family income by working during the summer vacations on various farms.

I am the youngest of four boys, and I have two younger sisters below me. The two older brothers' names are Isamu Jim, who was born on July 25, 1912, and Toshio Harry, who was born May 22, 1913. The third one, Saburo Howard, was born September 25, 1919. I was born November 21, 1921.

My sister Toshiko, married to Tom Takehara, was born February 2, 1926. The youngest of the siblings, Yoko Alice, born July 31, 1928, died of cancer at the age of 53, on November 16, 1981.

All of us were born here in Sacramento; however, my two older brothers, Jim and Harry, went to Japan during their early childhood. I don't know at what age, but I

MATSUHARA: I think I may have been about three years old [1924 or 1925], because Jim and Harry returned to California after their short period of education in Japan. Jim was 12 years [1924] old and Harry was eleven at the time of their return to the U.S.. They subsequently graduated from high school in Sacramento. They are what are referred to as *kibei*.¹ Howard and I graduated from Sacramento High School; whereas my two sisters graduated when they were at the internment camps.

In terms of the attitudes my folks displayed regarding Japan and the United States--they always stressed that this is our mother country, the United States--and, in any case, we should never dishonor the family name. This is one of the strong points that they always emphasized, and that we should not be involved in anything that would cause shame to the family. They always stressed that we should study hard and strive to do our best. Unlike most of the other families of Japanese ancestry, my folks never did stress that we should be attending Japanese language

1. An American of Japanese ancestry who, having been sent by his or her parents to Japan to be educated, subsequently returns to America to live. *Kibei* often had a difficult time readjusting to life in the U.S.

MATSUHARA: school after the public schools. They left it up to our own decision as to whether we wanted to or not.

WALKER: That's interesting, because they did send your two older brothers back to Japan. Did something happen between 1918 and 1925 that changed their way of thinking about the value of Japanese language and cultural education for their children ?

MATSUHARA: Well, it would have been quite a financial burden for the parents to have been sending us all back to Japan. . . . and, I guess that they became a little more at ease with the situation here in the United States. They probably thought that it was best that we got all of our education here.

WALKER: You mentioned the problem of finances. You said earlier that your father had had a heart attack and was unable to work for many years while most of his children were still small. What sense did you have of your financial situation ?

MATSUHARA: It wasn't a sense of poverty. We always had enough food at the table. Dad grew some vegetables in the family yard.

We were renting a home from a Mr. William Bening. We lived at 3rd & P, across the street from the Crocker Art Gallery. Incidentally, I was born on the then M

MATSUHARA: Street (which is now Capitol Avenue). There was a Japanese community there, and, in fact, there was a post office address of "Japan Alley"--that was between M and L Street. There was a boarding house right in that section, and I was born in the boarding house. After I was born, we moved to 3rd and P, where my folks rented this huge two story home for, I think, twenty five dollars a month. They subleased one floor, so that it was almost like having it rent free. But the landlord didn't seem to mind at all. He seemed anxious to be very helpful to the family. In fact, because his name was William Bening, I took up the middle name of William, because I didn't have a middle name until I went into junior high school--up to then I just went under "Yosh" or Yoshiro. Because of the admiration I had for this Mr. Bening, I started to use "William," or "Yoshiro William" Matsuhsara.

I remember that the elder Mr. Bening occupied the house right on the corner of 3rd and P Streets. He had other renters living in that house. It was a huge house. There was one man in an American family there who had a very inventive mind. He would start making things to sell, and one of the things that I still

MATSUHARA: remember distinctly was--you know these Christmas tree stands, that you see nowadays...?

WALKER: The metal kind ?

MATSUHARA: Unhuh, this was way back, like the 1930s or so. . . . He invented one of these stands, and he asked my folks if we would like to invest some money into the production of this stand. He claimed that there was a patent applied for. Whatever happened to it, I don't know, but when I think of it, you know. . . . the sales of these Christmas tree stands now. . . . here was this American family that had made this way before these stands came out. Unfortunately, he later took off, too...

WALKER: Your family did invest some money with him then ?

MATSUHARA: Yeah, whatever sum that was. How much my folks lost out of that, I don't know.

Anyway, during the summer months I would start off with farm work. . . . picking pears, peaches. . . . whatever crops were being harvested during the summer months.

WALKER: Do you remember what you were paid then ?

MATSUHARA: I think it was twenty five cents an hour. There was this place called the Nojiri Company across the river on the Tower Bridge. They used to take the heads off

MATSUHARA: the strawberries. They put them in a barrel and crushed them to make jam. They paid twenty five cents a crate.

WALKER: You said that you were paid about twenty five cents an hour for some of the fruit picking that you did. What did you do with the money that you earned ?

MATSUHARA: Well, I brought it home, gave it to my folks, and they kept it for me. And, of course, it wasn't all mine. It was kind of a family deal. . . . to help the family. . . . and also, for whatever personal needs that I might have, you know, it would come from the money that I earned.

WALKER: What system did the family use to decide how to spend the money that you earned ?

MATSUHARA: Not saying "this is so much for food," and so forth. I would just leave it up to them as to what they would allow.

Also, when I was going to junior college, I worked under the program of the National Youth Act, where, if you worked for an instructor, you would get (I think it was) eighteen dollars a month. Out of that I would buy books and help pay for lunch, and so forth.

WALKER: What kind of work did you do ?

MATSUHARA: I was briefing law cases for an instructor teaching law. I'd go to the State Library and read the law cases, condense them, run copies of my condensations for the instructor, and he would teach the class from what I had condensed from the law books.

WALKER: How did you get that job ?

MATSUHARA: I just applied for it. The course that I was taking (when I changed my major from chemistry to accounting). . . . one of the accounting courses called for a class in commercial law. Since the instructor thought that I had a knack for being able to condense things, he just hired me. So I would do all the work, essentially, for him, out of which he taught the class.

WALKER: Were you actively considering being a lawyer, at that point ?

MATSUHARA: No. I just figured it was a job. I didn't cherish the thought of being a lawyer.

Incidentally, I went through two years of City College, but I didn't apply for graduation at that time, because I figured I wanted to stay another year to go into accounting. It was during that period--when I was taking these accounting courses--that the War broke out. After that, I took out a leave, to go enlist.

MATSUHARA: First, I went to enlist and they turned me down on December the 8th--a Monday morning. The Recording Sargeant said "Hey ! We don't want any Japs in the Army!" Then, there were all kinds of rumors flying around as to what was going to happen to us. Some fathers of our friends, were immediately picked up by the FBI, on a Sunday night. They were whisked away, and they didn't know where they were going. So because of the apprehension we had, you know, as to what's going to happen to us (whether, gee, because we're Japanese are we going to get picked up too, you know, in spite of the fact that we're citizens), but then, because of that, I withdrew from school and thought of going to work someplace.

The State of California was interested in getting people to work for them, and so, I applied for work. Let's see, I worked first for the Department of Motor Vehicles for a month or less. This was after they gave me a very intensive quiz period, trying to determine whether I am a dangerous guy, also.

Then, from the Department of Motor Vehicles, I went to the Department of Employment, on 11th and P Street.

WALKER: Why did you leave the DMV, and go over to the Department of Employment?

MATSUHARA: Well, the work I was doing at the DMV was just too boring. I wasn't terminated. But then, when I went to Employment, I was placed in the incoming mail department, and I was sorting mail, and delivering mail, and some of that mail was supposed to be confidential stuff, you know, but I was allowed to work there.

Interestingly, I remember these two guys: Jerry and Michael. . . . these two Caucasians who were working with me at this mail department. . . . one guy was always concerned that he's going to get called up, you know ? And he told me, "Hey ! how about going in for me one day, when they call me up ?" Here I wanted to go in and they wouldn't take me and here this guy. . . . he doesn't want to go in and he's afraid he's going to get taken in. I got shipped away and so I didn't know whatever happened to him, but I always thought "Doggone it, how strange it is that they don't take somebody that wants to go in, and here's somebody that's trying to stay away."

Anyway, I subsequently [April 8, 1942] received a letter from the State Personnel Board. It indicates that because I'm of Japanese ancestry they couldn't trust me and so they fired me.

MATSUHARA: The letter says, "Sir, effective immediately, and upon receipt hereof, you are rejected and dismissed from your position in the State Civil Service, in accordance with Section 122 of the State Civil Service Act. . . . This action is being taken for the good of the public service, since there is a general lack of confidence on the part of the public and state employees in the loyalty of persons of Japanese ancestry, which general lack of confidence has adversely affected and lowered the quality of work and morale of many employees associated with you in the State Civil Service."

I was one of the last ones to get this letter. All of the others had previously gotten their letters and they had to leave work. So every afternoon--I used to go home for lunch--I'd ask my mother and dad, "Did I get a letter from the State Personnel Board?" I'm anticipating that I'm going to get fired, but I'm waiting until I got this letter here, see, this registered return receipt letter. When I did finally get it, I went to tell my supervisor, and she expressed her regrets that I was leaving. The unit got together and gave me a nice going away gift which I still have. I remember that Mrs. [Georgina] Wolff

MATSUHARA: said, "If you ever come back, and there's a job available, I sure would like to hire you back again, depending on the civil service situation."

WALKER: What kind of plans were you making with your family during this time for what might happen?

MATSUHARA: Fortunately, we had more time than some of the other areas in California. Some had, maybe, twenty four hours' notice. But we weren't evacuated until May of 1942. So, in the meantime, you're wondering "Gee, what's going to happen?" There were all kinds of talk about how you might be placed here, or sent there, so that the family is separated. Eventually, we got notice that we had to evacuate. Then, my folks had to figure out what to do with the property.

My brother had just recently bought a new car. He had to sell it for about 200 dollars or so, because he didn't know where to store it or what else was going to happen. People were always coming around saying "Hey ! we wanna buy this. You're not gonna come back. You don't know what's going to happen." So, my folks were selling the refrigerator or washing machine for five dollars, just within a few days. Mr. Bening kindly

MATSUHARA: offered to store some of the stuff in one of the downstairs rooms--whatever we could get in there.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

WALKER: Your father had a serious heart condition. This must have been a considerable problem for him--having to deal with his condition in the circumstances surrounding the evacuation. Can you describe the situation at that time?

MATSUHARA: First of all, when we were initially ordered to evacuate Sacramento, we had to worry about disposing the personal property, and so forth, and then we could only take so much, initially, to the Assembly Center, which was in Walerga. Walerga Assembly Center is located. . . . it'd be off I-80, north of the Breuner's establishment in Sacramento. . . . that was the Assembly Center, built primarily to hold about 5000 of us from the Sacramento area. We remained there for about a month, at which time we were then transported by train to the Tule Lake Center near the California-Oregon border. Because of my dad's health condition, they had a special block. . . . these camps were laid out in blocks, and each block had so many barracks, and then that constituted a ward--but I remember the block. . . . Block Number Nine, which was designated for families who had patients who needed special diet, or who needed to be closest to the camp

MATSUHARA: hospital. So, because of my dad's condition, we were placed in Block Nine in Tule Lake.

Because there was my dad, my mother, Howard, myself, my two sisters, we managed to get two rooms instead of one. If it was less than four, or so, you only had one room. But because we had six, we got two rooms. My two older brothers, incidentally, were living in San Diego at the time the War broke out, so they were eventually sent to a camp in Arizona.

WALKER: You said earlier that your older brothers were *kibei*. What was their attitude about the United States at this point?

MATSUHARA: I can only assume that they were quite bitter about being thrown into a Camp. Essentially, too, because they were working as fishermen on my Uncle's tuna boat in San Diego. When the War broke out, the government confiscated my Uncle's fishing boat. He was taken to an internment camp separate from the family because they considered him to be a potentially dangerous alien, since he owned a tuna boat. They didn't hear from Mr. [Motosuke] Tsuida for quite some time before they determined that he was someplace in Texas. But, we didn't hear too much from my two brothers during the time that they were in the other camps.

MATSUHARA: When we were in Tule, of course, we had to eat at the community mess hall. You had your community bath rooms and wash rooms, and so forth. You just had to eat what they served you. Eventually, when they established the canteen where you could buy food, then you'd buy things over there, or friends would send you food from the outside, and you'd be able to supplement what they cooked at the mess by cooking in the barracks with a hot plate.

WALKER: I've read that Tule Lake had fairly substantial vegetable gardens...

MATSUHARA: Vegetable, pig, chicken farm...

WALKER: Did your family work in those?

MATSUHARA: No. My parents didn't work at all. I worked as a timekeeper initially, and then I went into recreation work, for which I got paid sixteen dollars a month. Then, Pearl, my wife--we weren't married at that time--she was teaching shorthand at the high school. I think she was just getting 16 dollars a month. If you were a professional man--a doctor, or a dentist, or something--you got nineteen dollars a month. And then the lowest scale workers got paid twelve dollars a month. We were intermediate--right in there--at sixteen dollars a month. They gave us scrip for a

MATSUHARA: clothing allowance, and that amounted to getting some surplus Army clothes.

WALKER: How did they decide how much of this scrip each family got ?

MATSUHARA: Each individual got scrip.

WALKER: How did they decide who got what work ?

MATSUHARA: You just. . . . on your own initiative...

WALKER: There was a list of positions ?

MATSUHARA: Right, unhuh. So if you wanted to work out on the farm, you signed up for farm work. . . . recreation work, or time keeper, or block manager, or cook, or cook's help, or waiters, or whatever.

WALKER: What did a block manager do ?

MATSUHARA: Well, he more or less handled the needs of the block.

WALKER: He'd ask people what was bothering them, or what they wanted...?

MATSUHARA: He'd distribute the mail, and in general, he oversaw the people who were living in that one particular block. If there was any news, he'd pass the news on. It was a managerial job, so to speak.

WALKER: You said your parents didn't work at all while they were in the Camp. What was their state of mind at this time?

MATSUHARA: Well, my dad couldn't work at all anyway. And then, my mother, there was no cannery. . . . [laughter] so she spent her time making little crafts, and so forth. I have some of those sea shells that. . . . she'd go out and find sea shells and make lapel buttons, or something. . . . decorative stuff. . . . and work on art work.

WALKER: Tule Lake is famous for being the camp where the "no-no boys" were the strongest. Eventually, all those who chose not to declare their allegiance to the United States, or to enlist in the United States' Army, were segregated there. How aware were you early on that there were going to be problems at the camp ?

MATSUHARA: Initially, I didn't feel that there was this problem there. It only came, when they came out with this questionnaire. I've forgotten what number it was. . . . Twenty Seven and Twenty Eight. . . . they asked, "Are you willing to bear arms for the United States ?. . . . Are you willing to bear allegiance ?". . . . or words to that effect, and of course, this was disturbing to a lot of people because they figured "Why should we go into the Army, when you've got no home to come to ?". . . . you know. . . . "What are we fighting for ?"

WALKER: And the second question, I guess, required that you forswear any allegiance to Japan. . . . but, many of these people were not American citizens...

MATSUHARA: Right, they couldn't be. . . . and then they figured "Gee, what can we do ?". . . . you know. . . . and the uncertainty is the thing that caused a lot of problems. . . . what's going to happen ?. . . . and then, within the block you could sense some people saying "you're *bakatare* (a fool) if you say 'yes-yes' because what're you going to do ? Are you going to go in the Army while we stay here. . . . the family stays here ?" So, you could see the split there, within the block...

WALKER: What kinds of debates did you get involved in about it?

MATSUHARA: Initially, when they asked for volunteers, for the combat team to go to Europe. . . . that was the first time that they asked for volunteers. . . . some of my friends volunteered, but I was too upset about the whole situation. I figured, "I'm not going to go into a suicide regiment while my folks are still in Camp."

WALKER: Do you think that the 442nd was a suicide regiment ?

MATSUHARA: Well, this was the feeling that we had in Camp, you know, that they would be spearheading everything. . . . that they would be up front. . . .

MATSUHARA: and there were going to be a lot of casualties. . . . and you figured that you're not going to come back. So my feeling up to that point was, "I'm not going to give my life, after the way the government has treated those of Japanese ancestry." But then, eventually, my attitude changed because I used to get letters from my buddies that were in training, and, one of my closest friends (who was a little bit older than I was). . . . he had been drafted prior to the War, and he eventually ended up with the 442. . . . I'd hear from him, and I figured "that's my pal out there, I gotta do something to do my share". . . . in spite of the feeling that I initially had.

So, when they asked for volunteers to go to the Pacific, I thought, "Gee, my being in the Camp resulted because of actions of the Japanese military." So, I guess I was more angry at the Japanese military than I was with the Germans and Italians. So I figured, "I think I would like to go to the Pacific, instead."

So, I made my decision without consulting my parents. In that situation, I felt, "I gotta make my own decision." And so, I volunteered. Then I told my folks, "I just signed up to go to the Pacific."

WALKER: What was their reaction ?

MATSUHARA: Their reaction initially was. . . . they were concerned. . . . "Gee, what can we do if you lose your life in the Pacific? Do you still want to go, in spite of the fact that we'll be in Camp here?" And I said, "Well, that's the decision I have to make. I want to do my share." And I remember my dad saying, "This is your country, so give it your best. Take care of yourself." And, he told me not to worry too much about them. And so they gave me their blessing, which made me feel a whole lot better, of course.

My induction was on November 13, 1943, while we were still there in Tule Lake. At that time, there were plans that those of us who answered "yes-yes" had to be relocated to some other campsite other than Tule Lake, because from the ten centers spread out throughout the United States, those who answered "no-no" would be transferred to Tule Lake. So, they called Tule Lake a "segregation center." So those of us. . . . all those who answered "yes-yes" had to move out of Tule Lake. . . . and since my folks. . . . their decision was to stay in the United States. . . . and my sisters were staying in the United States. . . . had to move to

MATSUHARA: Topaz, Utah, which is about 200 miles from Salt Lake City, in the desert.

After I helped my folks pack and relocate to this other camp at Topaz, Utah, on January 11, 1944, I was inducted through Ft. Douglas, Utah. From there, I went to E Company, in Camp Savage, Minnesota--to the Military Intelligence Language School--and went through an intensive nine month course in Japanese language and culture, geography, methods of interrogation, interpreting, decoding, and so forth.

WALKER: You mentioned that your parents didn't particularly encourage you to attend Japanese School, but, in fact, you did attend Japanese School on your own initiative in Sacramento, starting at about the age of...

MATSUHARA: I was in junior high school. So, I decided "Gee, maybe I would like to learn something about the Japanese language." So, I told my folks, "I would like to go to the Japanese Language School after the public school classes." So, after the public schools, for one hour, you'd attend the Japanese Language School. They had a fee that you had to pay. . . . I forgot what it was. . . . but, every month you had to pay what they call a gesha. . . . a fee. . . . an enrollment fee. . . . and so, initially, I started off from

MATSUHARA: scratch: reading and writing Japanese. I was with the youngsters, so to speak. And then, because I was able to go at my own speed, I eventually came up to the level of my own age group. And so I went through the Language School up to the time I went into high school.

Then, after that I dropped out of the Language School, but I was able to get enough reading and writing of Japanese that when I went to Camp Savage, I was still able to get into a low-medium rating class. Because of that, I was in a nine month course. Some of those who were more proficient in it went through the course in six months.

WALKER: Where was the Language School in Sacramento ?

MATSUHARA: The one that I went to was. . . . they had different ones. . . . the one that I went to was at the *Nichiren* Buddhist Church. They were located on P Street, between 3rd and 2nd Street. The Buddhist Church had a larger Japanese Language School, and they were located on O Street between 4th and 5th Street.

WALKER: Where were the teachers recruited ?

MATSUHARA: Teachers were primarily *Isseis*.¹

1. Older Japanese Americans born in Japan.

WALKER: They were volunteers ?

MATSUHARA: No, they got paid. Interesting, too. . . . they had classes in *judo*, *kendo*, fencing, and they had these *sumo*. . . . Japanese wrestling. . . . and it was quite an event being in these *sumo* tournaments. And, I was interested in *sumo* tournaments, so, when I was a kid, I used to get into these tournaments. It was quite competitive.

WALKER: I take it you didn't all have to weigh 300 lbs. ?

MATSUHARA: [laughter] No. They had different levels. They used to draw quite a crowd. It was quite an event, especially when they had a tournament on the 4th of July. They had it before at the grounds of the Buddhist Church and they also had tournaments at this "Japan Alley." There was a lot there that they set up these *sumo* rings. . . . like I say, it drew quite a crowd.

WALKER: Did Caucasians and others attend ?

MATSUHARA: No. This was primarily Japanese. Also, in terms of activities prior to the War, we were involved in athletics--mostly basketball and baseball. There was football, too, but I was involved primarily in basketball. The fact that I was involved in basketball

MATSUHARA: with a *nisei* team (second generation Japanese American) at the high school level was because of our size. The coach kind of frowned on us going out for the team unless we were out for the C team, or the B team. In terms of trying to play for the varsity, it was almost nil. Very rarely you found a *nisei* playing football, basketball, baseball for the varsity. Of course, on the junior high school level it was quite different. Lincoln Junior High School (that I went through) at that time was mostly Asians, and so we were able to make the teams. And, of course, I was competitive throughout the junior high schools in Sacramento. They had sort of a league-like thing that young kids were able to participate in. But at the high school level, or the junior college level, it was very rare that you found any *niseis* involved in this. So, because we played in the *Nisei* League, it involved teams from various cities in the Valley here, and also in the Bay Area.

We used to draw quite a bit of crowd--especially at the Buddhist Church. It had a large gym, that was later converted into an induction center, after we got evacuated. We played all our games there.

Incidentally, it was on December 7, 1941, when we were

MATSUHARA: involved in a championship basketball game. . . . you know, and then the interest was more about the news about the War than about the championship basketball game. And, even though Sacramento came out with a championship, we didn't celebrate as much as you would like to because we were concerned about the War situation.

Of course, some of these recreational things carried on into while were in Camp, so we were able to participate in athletics, you know, with teams that you formed in Camp.

WALKER: I wondered about the fact that the Japanese schools seem to have been carried on mostly through the Buddhist churches. You're not a Buddhist, are you ?

MATSUHARA: I was a Buddhist. . . . well, in fact, in terms of religion, you know, as a youngster, I used to go to the Buddhist Church, the Baptist Church, the Nichiren Buddhist Church...

WALKER: What's the difference between a Nichiren Buddhist Church and the "regular" Buddhist Church ?

MATSUHARA: Well, the Nichiren Buddhist Church was a little bit more. . . . well, they had the drums and everything. The service was a little bit different. . . . more

MATSUHARA: Lively. But in terms of the teachings of Buddha, you know, I would say it was about the same.

WALKER: It's not an "American" branch. . . . I mean, they have Nichiren Buddhist churches in Japan as well ?

MATSUHARA: Right. Of course the Buddhist Church was the largest of the Japanese churches, so to speak. They had the most membership.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

WALKER: Mr. Matsuhara, we were talking about your participation in Japanese School at the *Nichiren* Buddhist Church, and we were talking about your religious affiliation. Could you tell us what your parents' attitude was toward religion, and how it was that you came to attend the various churches that you attended?

MATSUHARA: First of all, I used to go to the Baptist Church, because one of my best friends was a Baptist, and he always used to come after me on Sunday mornings, to go to Baptist Church. And, the Baptist Church did have a small gymnasium. But then, eventually, we started a team of our own. . . . and then, the Buddhist Church wanted us to play for them, because we had some pretty good players on this independent team that we had on our own.

I decided to go to the Buddhist Church because they gave us the best deal in terms of basketball schedules and uniforms. Then they offered us travels and uniforms and everything.

My folks were not ardent church goers. They only went to church on special occasions. My mother & dad never insisted that "you gotta go to church." They

MATSUHARA: left things much to ourselves, you know. . . . except to say, "Be sure that you behave yourself." They were very sports-minded, so they would follow the team--both my mother and dad (with other Isseis who were interested in sports)--to come see the games. So, it was not unusual to find very many *issei* parents going to the gym. As a matter of fact, the minister of the Buddhist Church, at that time, was interested in how we were doing, too. He'd come out and say, "I gotta cut my sermon short, so I can go see you guys play." [laughter] So, that was the reason I remained with the Buddhist Church: because of the opportunity to play basketball for them. . . . and also, the fact that they provided a lot of things that other teams didn't provide.

We'd take barnstorming tours down to southern Cal. One year we took a tour up to Oregon and Washington. We were contemplating taking a tour to Utah and Denver, but that was the time when the War broke out, so...

WALKER: You were playing *nisei* teams...?

MATSUHARA: *Nisei* teams. As a matter of fact, teams from Hawaii would even come to play in the mainland here...

WALKER: How were all of these things financed ?

MATSUHARA: Just on your own. . . . or maybe the organization might chip in, or we might sell raffle tickets and finance the trips.

Basketball was primarily the major attraction in those days because you didn't have tv--just a radio, and so forth. In terms of other activities, it was kind of limited to within your own racial group. You didn't intermingle like you do nowadays. It was very rare that you had interracial marriages. So, if you didn't belong--within your own racial group--where could you go ? There was that cohesiveness that you sort of enjoyed--that you don't enjoy nowadays--because our interests are so varied, and people go here and yonder for whatever activities that they might get involved in.

WALKER: Let's shift gears now and go back to the Camps, because that's where we left you when we were talking about your training. Actually, we had just gotten you to Camp Savage in Minnesota. You had to make a choice within the Camp itself, didn't you, in terms of what kind of work you were going to be doing in the Army once your training was completed. Can you tell me about that ?

MATSUHARA: No, You didn't have your choice. You took all of these courses: interpreting, interrogation, geography. We had to learn. . . . as a matter of fact, the classes were from eight to noon and then from one to five, and then compulsory study, seven to nine. . . . five days a week. And every Saturday morning you had a test from eight to noon. Then, you could get a pass to go into St. Paul or Minneapolis.

But it was a very intensive course. . . . every day you had to memorize 100 *kanjis*. Some of us, after "lights'out" at ten o'clock, would pull a blanket over our head, with a flashlight, or go to the latrine, and do some studying. It was very intensive...

WALKER: You said you had 100 *kanjis* to learn per day. That means you had 500 on the test every Saturday ?

MATSUHARA: Right, unhuh. And it's all a matter of memory...

WALKER: Were they characters that would build on each other, or were they all entirely separate ?

MATSUHARA: Some of them were kind of interrelated, but then, you know, in Japanese *kanji*, there's a way to read it in Japanese, and there's a Chinese reading, so you had to learn the two readings and so whatever the *kanji* that

MATSUHARA: might be on top or on the bottom, you kind of have to find out how to read those.

WALKER: Why did the instructors feel it was valuable to know the Chinese way of reading it ?

MATSUHARA: It's just that the Japanese language, basically, is a Chinese language made a little bit more difficult.

[laughter] You also had to learn how to talk to. . . . there's a way that you address a person at your level, a way you address a person superior to you, somebody below. . . . a way you talk to a person in a military way. You had to learn all these. . . . get quite proficient at it. The hardest was trying to learn Japanese what they call *Sosho*. That's something like shorthand in Japanese. I could never master that proficiently.

WALKER: Japanese Army people would use that for diaries ?

MATSUHARA: Not necessarily Japanese Army personnel, but, anybody. It's really complicated, and trying to master all that is quite a task...

But then, after you graduated--whether it be in the six month or the nine month session--they figured that the course they gave in Intelligence School was almost comparable to what you might go through at War College in Japan. And so, for this reason, there wasn't much

MATSUHARA: publicity about the Military Intelligence Language School. . . . because it was a so-called "secret weapon" of the United States.

They didn't know that we were able to decipher and decode the messages that the Japanese Army and Navy were transmitting. And the fact that the MIS--the Military Intelligence Service personnel--were able to do that, [General Douglas] MacArthur claimed that the War in the Pacific was shortened by at least two years and saved countless numbers of American lives.

WALKER: I understand that they had a very powerful radio there, and you were able to pick up broadcasts from Tokyo...

MATSUHARA: I don't know about that, but the things that were brought to light later was that there were some who volunteered for the Intelligence Service earlier. They were with Merrill's Marauders. They were in the Pacific Theater where they were right up to the front lines with the units. . . . and to the extent that they were able to hear the commands given by the Japanese officers, "Go to the right flank" or "the left flank" and so forth. . . . and so, because these Intelligence soldiers were at the front line, with these troops, they were able to tell the GIs, "Hey ! They're coming from the left flank (or the right flank)" and they'd be

MATSUHARA: ready for them. But these were things that the Japanese Army personnel didn't know.

And so, they were valuable in terms of front-line duties, and also, when you got captured documents you were able to decipher--you know, determine where the gun emplacements were, what the orders were--and these things were all unaware to the Japanese Army, as to what's being done. They didn't realize that the U.S. Army had personnel that could decode, decipher, interpret all these things. That's why--as far as the MIS were concerned--they didn't get the publicity that the 442 and the 100th Infantry got. It was all a "hush hush" deal. It's only a few years ago that a little of this has been able to come trickling out. In fact, a lot of people didn't realize that there were close to five or six thousand of us in the Pacific. They didn't hear about it. Some GIs didn't even know that we were with them, unless they were with us as body guards, so to speak, because we faced the problem of being shot at by them [the Japanese], and also by our own troops.

WALKER: One more thing before we leave the subject of the Military Intelligence School at Ft. Savage. I was just curious. . . . you mentioned that you got liberty to go

WALKER: into St. Paul and Minneapolis. What did you do there, and how were you received by the community ?

MATSUHARA: The Scandinavian people that predominantly settled in that area were very hospitable. Usually, we ended up going to the USO...

WALKER: A genuine, integrated USO ?

MATSUHARA: Yeh, right. They were so hospitable that. . . . to the extent that. . . . I felt that if I got discharged I would want to settle either in St. Paul, or Minneapolis. But the fact that my folks came back to Sacramento, you know, that's why I returned to Sacramento. Otherwise, I would have gone back to Minneapolis or St. Paul to settle there. That's how much I thought of the people there. In terms of prejudice, and so forth, you didn't sense that as you did on the Pacific Coast. They treated us as Americans. For that reason, it was real nice to be up there.

Of course, there was some resentment with the white troops when we moved to Ft. Snelling. There was some resentment initially, that we were going into Ft. Snelling to establish a school there, and they had to move elsewhere.

MATSUHARA: That's one of the incidents in terms of Army experience. . . . of course, the other experience was in Ft. McClellan in Alabama, where we went for basic infantry training...

WALKER: This was where you went after you finished your language training ?

MATSUHARA: Language School, yeh. And then we went for the basic infantry training. At Ft. McClellan, the cadre there told us, "Don't go into the negroes". . . . they were called "negroes" then. . . . "Don't go into the negroes' PX, or the theater. . . . you get on the bus, you sit in the front, don't go to the back". . . . and he said, "because you are white." And so, we were "white men" in an Army camp in Ft. McClellan, and we had to be careful that we didn't associate with the black soldiers. Which was kind of disturbing. . . . that, you know, here, I grew up as a kid in a very cosmopolitan feeling, where I had friends: Blacks, Mexicans, and Italian, and so forth. . . . then, you come into the Army and they tell you you can't associate with the negroes.

WALKER: How did the Blacks relate to you ?

MATSUHARA: There were no incidents against us, or anything, but I can't help but feel that there was resentment on their

MATSUHARA: part that they were treated like they were: they had to sit in the back of the bus, and they had their own PX, and so forth.

Interestingly too, in the Midwest, because prior to the War there weren't too many Asians, when I used to get a 3 day pass, to go from Camp Savage to Kansas City. . . . my wife (we weren't married), Pearl had relocated too, you know--made clearance to go out of the Camp to work in Kansas City--so, on the train, people would look at me, and I know that they were wondering who I was, you know. I'm in my uniform. . . . and I recall one of them asked, "are you an Eskimo ?" [laughter] So, "kiddin' me," I said, "Yeh ! I'm an Eskimo."

Those incidents I always remember, and, of course, I suppose the thing that was most disturbing was, before going overseas, to go visit my folks in Internment Camp. They searched me, and I'm in uniform, and you still get searched. And, you know, feeling like here I'm going to go overseas, so I came to see my folks, and I may not come back, and had to go through a search like that, you know, like if I'm somebody still dangerous, and so forth. It was very humiliating.

MATSUHARA: The other side. . . . in Japan though. . . . the Japanese people treated me so well...

WALKER: This was after the War ?

MATSUHARA: Yeh, after the War and I'm serving Occupation with the 11th Airborne. Families always seemed very understanding. . . . that since I was born here in the States. I would tell them I'm a volunteer to fight in the Pacific, and they seemed understanding that I volunteered.

WALKER: Because you owe your allegiance to where you live ?

MATSUHARA: Yeh. They said "This is your loyalty." And a couple of the families would say, "Your folks are so far away, while you're here, we're your parents."

WALKER: Well, you'd finished your language training, and you'd finished your basic training. . . . How did you find out where you were going to go and what you were going to do ?

MATSUHARA: I knew that we were going to be shipped to the Pacific, and we were eventually told that we were going to the Philippine Islands. So, we went by way of the Marshall Islands, Eniwetok, and eventually to the Philippines.

WALKER: Had the Army already invaded the Philippines before you got there ?

MATSUHARA: Oh yeh, at the closing stages of the War. But then, still we were concerned about possible "diehards". . . . Japanese that might still be in the jungle, or any other place that they might be hiding out. . . . Then, of course, they had a large prison compound where we had to go and interrogate the prisoners about conditions in Japan.

WALKER: Where in the Philippines was this ?

MATSUHARA: This was in Alabang. It's close to Manila. There were times when you'd go out with a patrol, to see if you could bring in any more prisoners. Some of the prisoners don't seem to realize that the War was close to an end. You had to be cautious as to whether they were going to come out with no regard about their own lives. You kind of had to talk to them and convince them to give up.

WALKER: Do you think you were "convincing ?"

MATSUHARA: I think I was, yeh, because I'm alive. [laughter]

WALKER: What kinds of things did you tell them to persuade them to give up ?

MATSUHARA: "It's a lost cause" and "Think of your family back home" . . .

WALKER: But what about the humiliation to the family if they were to surrender ?

MATSUHARA: Well, you kind of had to convince them that there really was no humiliation, you know...that they had to think in terms of the future...if they had any children, or the wife was still waiting at home: "You owe it to them to come home." And that, "You're not the only one that's surrendering, you won't be alone." It was just a matter of persuasion and make sure that you're not going to be there to harm him, and you're trying to help him.

But the thing that's most fearful is: you're unarmed--he's still armed. You don't know what to expect.

WALKER: Why were you unarmed ?

MATSUHARA: Well, because if I went in armed, you know, they would think that I'm still going to fight them. It's a general tactic that we be unarmed.

WALKER: And you were basically unsupported ? You were by yourself ?

MATSUHARA: No, there were GIs that came with you, because they had to make sure that. . . . they were armed, but if I'm willing to expose myself, you know, to the threat that they're going to give to me, they know that I'm sincere. . . . that I don't intend to harm them.

WALKER: What kind of terrain were you doing this work in ?

MATSUHARA: Well, this was in the outskirts of Manila. In Okinawa they had these tombs right in the hillsides. You didn't know who was in there. It's really something, you know, all these tombs that were built in the hills in Okinawa.

It was just the uncertainty as to the actions of who you were confronting, you know. I guess, by the grace of God, nothing unusual happened to jeopardize you, or was left. Only thing that came close to dying was when I flew from the Philippines to Okinawa. I requested a switch from the Counter Intelligence Corps to the 176th Language Detachment.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

WALKER: Mr. Matsuhara, we were talking about a switch you made from one branch of the Military Intelligence Service to another. . . . a switch that was fortunate in your case, because it saved your life, in fact. Could you tell us about this incident?

MATSUHARA: Well, when we were in the Philippines, they divided twenty of us into two teams: ten of us were initially assigned to the Counter Intelligence Corps of the 11th Airborne Division and the other ten were assigned to the 176th Language Detachment of the 11th Airborne Division. For some unknown reason, I wanted to change from the Counter Intelligence Corps to the Language Detachment, so I asked the officer in charge if it would be possible for me to change places with another fellow initially assigned to the Language Detachment, and to go to the CIC. Both the officer and the other person were agreeable to this switch, so we switched places. It turned out that our plane landed safely on Okinawa, but the others, with the Counterintelligence Corps crashed in trying to make a landing on Okinawa after an air raid alert was sounded.

MATSUHARA: The following morning, we had to come down from the hills to identify those who were killed in that plane crash. It was quite a shock, of course, to see my friends who had died in that crash. It must have been fate that I was spared that ordeal.

WALKER: What was the difference between what the people in the counter intelligence unit did and what the people in the language unit did ?

MATSUHARA: The Counter Intelligence Corps, as I understood it, was more investigative. . . . not only the goings on of the Japanese, but also those doings within the U.S. forces. The Language Detachment was primarily to work with the Japanese government: interpreting, interrogating, getting Army information.

WALKER: When you say, "work with the Japanese government" you're talking about before the War is over though, aren't you ?

MATSUHARA: Well, when the War is over. . . . planning stages. . . . we had to find out still the possible threat of any more "diehards" who may figure there's no surrender. So that was one of the concerns when we initially landed at Atsugi Airport in Japan, on the first day of Occupation. You didn't know whether you were still going to fight some Japanese forces that

MATSUHARA: might consider they still want to fight. And so, when we landed, we landed with our full equipment: two grenades on the strap, and we carried carbines, not the regular M1s. We were fully armed for any emergency that might arise.

Interestingly though, when we landed, the Japanese Army trucks were waiting for us, to take us to our bivouac area. We got on their trucks, and they came to a stop, initially, to a real nice place, and we thought "We're gonna stay there." It turned out that was for the officers. They took us to another place. As I recall, it was a racetrack or something.

We got off there, and we drifted away from the racetrack where we were supposed to stay, and we went looking around the neighborhood for an appropriate house, and, we were yelling out in Japanese, "Is there anybody home ?". . . . you know. . . . "We'd like to talk to you." Then this old gentleman came out from nowhere. He asked us what we wanted, and we told him "We want a place where we can stay for the night, because we just got in." And he says, "Well, that house there, has a lot of fleas, so you come with me." He took us to his place where they stayed in the

MATSUHARA: racetrack. And he said, "You could have this particular room."

Then we broke out our rations, and we had these chocolate bars out of the K rations, and he had his eyes wide open as to how we were cutting the chocolate. We told him, "You can have some," and he really appreciated that. In fact, the crumbs that were on the table, you know, he scraped them up and said those were the first sweets he'd tasted in years. . . . very appreciative.

In talking with him that night. . . . he and his other friends that were also in that area there. . . . they said that they were glad that the War was over, and that essentially the people of Japan didn't want the War. It was the military. . . . the military had so much to say, so, they had to go along with what the military had decided to do. So, in terms of their attitudes on the War, they were really relieved that the War had come to an end.

WALKER: And it's not your impression that they were in any sense frightened of the American soldiers, or had any feeling of hostility toward them ?

MATSUHARA: There was some fears, you know, about what would happen to them. Realizing that we meant them no harm, I think, was an assurance to them.

In terms of assurances, it was interesting that, when I was with the Advance Echelon and went out further north, in talking with the officials, you know, they had a term for "red light district," and I didn't know what it was in Japanese, and they're talking about that, and I wondered, "Gee, what are they talking about ?" [laughter] They were concerned about having a "red light district" established for the troops. That was kind of humorous when I thought about it later. Here they're talking about *iro machi* (that's "colored district," "red light district," you know), and it didn't dawn on me that that was what they were talking about.

WALKER: So you were made the administrator of this project ?

MATSUHARA: No, they were asking if there were any particular "red light district" that they would want to set up for the troops. Then, later on, when the Black troops came in, they were kind of afraid of them. They didn't know what to expect from the Black troops. Of course, later, when they found out that the Black troops treated the women nice, they didn't seem to mind. But

MATSUHARA: initially, they were quite fearful as to what they're going to expect from the Black troops.

WALKER: You know, that raises an interesting question. Since the Black troops were segregated from the other troops in the U.S. Army in Japan, did they have their own *nisei* interpreters that would go with them ? Or were they just thrown on their own resources ?

MATSUHARA: I can't recall any *niseis* attached to the Black troops. Of course, somehow or another, you know, even though you didn't have interpreters or interrogators attached to the troops, GIs seemed to manage one way or another.

Most of the time that I did my interpreting, there was a Japanese civilian, or a Japanese officer, that could speak fluent English. I would tell my officer, "Let the other guy (or the other lady) interpret, and I'll see if she's doing it ok." There were some terms that I was unfamiliar with, and they would be interpreting, and I would tell them, "Clarify a little bit. . . . more simply." So, that was one way I was able to solve some of these problems that came about.

WALKER: It sounds as though the Japanese government--at least at the local level--continued to function fairly efficiently after the surrender...

MATSUHARA: Right. There was one situation where me and one of my friends were invited to a dinner with a Japanese admiral in the naval station of the Advance Echelon that we were preceding. Ted backed out at the last minute, so I was left alone to go. A Japanese lieutenant came after me to go to this dinner, and this lieutenant spoke very fluent English. As I recall, he went to a university in the States before the War. Then, I had dinner with the admiral, and, of course, we weren't too well-verses about the protocol about how to behave ourselves, you know. [laughter] It would have been customary for a Japanese to have taken a gift, or something. I didn't take anything, and I felt kind of bad about it later. I should have taken some cigarettes, or something, with me and given it to him, but, I neglected to do that because I never thought about the protocol.

Then, the idea of "here I am an enlisted man sitting with an admiral and his staff." But, we had a nice dinner out of that, and it was quite enjoyable. He was interested about myself, and we had a nice evening.

WALKER: Can you tell me some more about the Advance Echelon...exactly what your responsibilities were ?

MATSUHARA: Well, our responsibilities were. . . . before the Division moved up to occupy a certain area. . . . we had to go and find out what facilities were available, and if available, were they feasible for the troops to occupy? So, we'd go on ahead and contact the officials in a particular area, ask them to show us these facilities, and if it's ok, then we'd send word back and say that it's ok that the troops come up. In every case, these officials were very cordial and very helpful. They tried everything to make sure that everything went along fine.

In Yamagata and in Akita, they wanted to take over the best residence in the city for the commanding general to occupy. So we had to go with the officials to one of the most elaborate homes that we'd seen. It had Japanese style and American style within this home. We had to oust the occupants there, and, of course, they moved to another home which was equally good. Then, that would be the primary residence for General Dorn [Brigadier General Franklin Dorn].

WALKER: When you say "oust," do you mean you literally had to throw them out, or did they go willingly?

MATSUHARA: No, we said, "We would like this home here for General Dorn. Can you make arrangements to move out ?" And, of course, they couldn't say "no."

WALKER: So, the owners were not the ones who volunteered the properties...

MATSUHARA: Officials would say that this is the home that would be appropriate for the General to occupy.

WALKER: Were you put in the position of having to assess whether that would be a good idea in terms of protocol within the community ? Was it possible that you might have to choose between several different residences and you would have to worry about whether parties would be upset ?

MATSUHARA: No, that choice wasn't mine. My idea was to make sure that whatever conversation took place was just the way it was. So, if the villagers tell the occupant, "This is the home that would be appropriate for a General. We'd like for you to leave." Then they accepted it, I guess, as one of the "spoils of war," so to speak.

After the General occupied it, I did stay in these homes with the General for awhile, until I asked that I go back with the regular troops. And the family would come by, every now and then, and ask permission to see the home. [laughter]

WALKER: You say you asked for permission to go back with the regular troops. Or were you asked to go back?

MATSUHARA: No, I asked the General, "Gee, I'd like to go back and stay with the regular troops." You know, in a sense, you kind of live like a king, staying there, but then, you miss your own buddies.

WALKER: They weren't all in their own fancy homes, then?

MATSUHARA: No. They were in the regular. . . . where they took over the schools, or something like that. . . . it's just the idea that I didn't want to be bedding where I was. Even though it was the nicest facility. So, I asked, "Is there any chance of my going back to live with the regular troops?" And, he was very nice about it. . . . said, "Go on ahead."

WALKER: When you went back that was the end of your Advance Echelon work then?

MATSUHARA: Right. After the Advance Echelon. . . . they came up, you know. . . . I was living in the same residence with the General and the jeep driver and a couple other officers, you know. . . . and so, the jeep driver and I were the only enlisted personnel living at the house. . . . one in Akita and one in Yamagata. The people that continued to live there would be the cooks

MATSUHARA: and the maids, the groundskeeper, and so forth. But, I think they treated us much better than actually the officers.

All in all, it was quite an experience. But in the long run, like I said, I wanted to go back and rejoin my other buddies.

WALKER : Once you did that, how long were you still in Japan ?

MATSUHARA: Well, I stayed in Japan eight months. So, I'd say I must have stayed in that situation maybe five to six months before I went back to stay with troops.

WALKER: So that takes us almost to the Spring of '46 ?

MATSUHARA: Right. And then later our Division moved up to Hokkaido. So, about that time, I had enough points to be discharged to come home. They couldn't talk me into reenlisting, and they said, if you don't reenlist, why don't you get a civil service job, get an overseas discharge and you can work around the area.

But I wanted to come home. Prior to my coming home, I asked for temporary duty for one week to go up to Hokkaido, just to see what it was like. So the officer granted me that TDY to go to Hokkaido and. . . . at that time, there was this ferry going from Honshu to Hokkaido, and the Captain of the ferry allowed me to

MATSUHARA: stay in his cabin during my trip on the ferry over to Hokkaido, and I was treated just like a special guest while I was going over there.

WALKER: This must have been very difficult for the Japanese because the food supplies were rather short...

MATSUHARA: Well, I don't know how they survived. Maybe it's the rice and sweet potatoes, or whatever. . . . but, I never saw an emaciated Japanese. Somehow or other, they seemed to be well-fed. The ones that I saw.

In terms of sweets and necessities, I guess, unless you were a very wealthy person, you didn't have them. These wealthy family homes that we took over. . . . when they moved to another residence of their own. . . . after you became friendly with them and you visited them, it was surprising what they came out with. It's customary that they serve you something, you know, and they had their sugar and coffee and tea and everything. What they lacked was maybe. . . . you gave them American cigarettes, they were very appreciative. But, in general, they were, in terms of being. . . . showed hospitality. . . . it was just fabulous.

WALKER: What had you been hearing from your family back in the States ?

MATSUHARA: One of the problems was that since I was moving around so much, you know, I had problems with the letters following me. And, as a matter of fact, I often wondered, "Gee, how are my folks doing. . . . Where are they located ?" I didn't realize that they had relocated back from Topaz to Sacramento until maybe shortly before I came home. So, that's when I realized that I'm going to come back to Sacramento, and not be sent to Minneapolis or St. Paul, when I had to be discharged. So, I gave my address as 906 1/2 T Street, where my folks were living.

WALKER: The Bening's house ?

MATSUHARA: No no, this was. . . . the Bening's house was. . . . I don't know whatever happened to them at that time, but my brother, in the meantime, had come home. He had made arrangements to purchase this home at 906 1/2 T Street. So that's where my folks were living, and I came home in May of '46.

[End Session 1, November 6, 1990]

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Session II, November 13, 1990]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

WALKER: Mr. Matsuhara, what were your plans when you left Japan in May of 1946, to come back to the United States?

MATSUHARA: Well, my original plans were. . . . I don't know if I mentioned it before, but. . . . my intentions were to settle in the state of Minnesota. However, since my folks had decided to return to Sacramento to live, I requested that I be discharged as close as possible to Sacramento. So, I was discharged at Camp Beale, California.

After I returned home, my folks had rented a place on 906 1/2 T Street. My intention initially was to possibly go back to school again, but I found out that my real good friends who had been discharged earlier had started to work already, so I decided two weeks after my discharge to find a job.

I did manage to find a job, I think it was at the Sacramento Signal Depot, where they were disposing of surplus war goods. . . . war materials. . . . and so I was working for the War Assets Administration as an inventory control accountant. Along this line of work, I was quite disturbed to find that most of the items

MATSUHARA: that were supposedly put on sale were marked "sold out" even before the doors were opened.

Some of the people who knew the so-called "big-shots" who ran the administration, wanted some of the "hot" items, and so, at this ridiculous low price, they were able to get a word in, you know, that they "wanted to buy it." So, as the inventory control person, I had to mark the card as "sold out." When the other veterans came in, you told them, "It's not available." This caused quite a bit of a problem. You always had to refer them back to the supervisor and tell them, "You get an explanation from him."

Let's see, now. . . . I also worked. . . . I must have worked about a year for the War Assets Administration. Then there was a time when I worked. . . . let's see, I was working as a. . . . on the job training as a dental technician, making prosthetics. I got paid about \$100 a month from the government, and then the dentist gave us a certain salary.

Then I found out that the work was too tedious and I got a little tired with the dentist whom I was working for. He was pretty grumpy

MATSUHARA: about a lot of things. If things didn't go right for him, he'd take it out on us. So, I said, "I quit."

Then, I had a job, also. . . . let's see. . . . I had various state jobs for short durations. I drifted along from one job to another. One that I recall is. . . . I was working as an accounting technician for the Division of Architecture. Then, I also worked for the Department of Mental Hygiene as a statistical clerk.

I asked my boss at Mental Hygiene that my job should be up-graded, but then, he didn't go to bat for me and I stayed as a Senior Clerk.

WALKER: You seem to have had quite a lot of jobs. Was it easy to get jobs at that time ?

MATSUHARA: I kind of shifted around quite a bit. Fortunately, I was able to get these jobs. Particularly at Mental Hygiene, I was in charge of so many people under me, but the boss just didn't seem to have enough confidence in me to up-grade my job after taking a test to request for a higher position. I noticed that after I left, some person was given an up-graded job, doing the job that I had been doing. I felt that it was kind of a matter of prejudice.

MATSUHARA: When I was working for Mental Hygiene, also, I used to read about problems with juvenile delinquency. So, maybe, "Gee, instead of just being involved with figures, I'd rather work with 'real figures'." So, I took a test to be a Group Supervisor at the Youth Authority. . . . at the Northern Reception Center and Clinic in Perkins.

I went for an interview there and the person who interviewed me came right out and said, "You know, you're available on the list. I want to hire you because you're a Japanese American. I want to hire you because I want my staff to be a diversified staff." He was the first person who came right out and said why he wanted me.

I initially started off as a Group Supervisor, assigned to. . . . actually the Control Center, where they controlled people coming in, and so forth, running whatever sick call...the dental list, or whatever. Then, I eventually went to the dormitory. . . . to supervise the wards in the dormitory situation.

Then, I took a test as a Senior Group Supervisor. Even though I was not in the top three, the Head Group Supervisor went to bat for me. From what I understand from other people that passed higher than me. . . . I

MATSUHARA: was, I think, about eighth, or something like that. He approached them and asked them to waive it so that they could reach me. I was really greatful to him, that he thought well enough of me to ask other people to waive the. . . . to get the position. . . . so I could be reached.

WALKER: About what time was this ?

MATSUHARA: This was in. . . . let's see, 19. . . . this was from June of 1954 to November '55...I was a Group Supervisor of the Youth Authority at the Northern Reception Center and Clinic in Perkins. Then, from November of '55 to July of '58, I was a Senior Group Supervisor at the same institution.

Then, I had the institutional experience, so I wanted to get into field work---be either a Probation Officer or a Parole Officer. So, ^{had} passed a test for Deputy Probation Officer with Sacramento County. I started to work for Sacramento County in July of '58, as a Deputy Probation Officer, and worked in that position until July of '61. Then, from July of '61 to November of '61, I became a Senior Deputy Probation Officer.

At that time, there was some Civil Service. . . . I don't know if it was a Civil Service matter or

MATSUHARA: not. . . . but then, I was able to get that senior position because of what they call a career position. Then, they did away with the career position, so I had to revert back to a Deputy Probation Officer in December of '61, until December of '62 (at which time, I was able to get on a permanent list as a Senior Deputy Probation Officer.) I worked as a Senior Deputy Probation Officer until I retired on March 31, 1981.

Interestingly, at the Probation Department, things were a little different. I would pass the test for a Supervising Probation Officer, but then I wouldn't be high enough to be reached. They didn't go to bat for me like they did at the Youth Authority. I had to train people who passed the test, you know, in the jobs that they would be doing as a Supervising Probation Officer. They would be then appointed Supervising Probation Officer, and then I'd be working under them. While they're Supervisors, they're coming to me for advice as to how to do things. This ticked me off quite a bit: I knew more about the job than they did, I trained them, and now they're supervising me. The fact that, of course, its my fault that I wasn't high enough on the list to be appointed, but if I was high

MATSUHARA: enough, I have reservations that they would have appointed me. I felt that there was prejudice there.

WALKER: These rankings were a result of written examinations ?

MATSUHARA: Written and oral. I couldn't help but feel that at my oral they could always downgrade you down. . . . or really upgrade you. I felt they knew what I was capable of doing. I had the best performance reports, but when it came down to testing and so forth, somebody else was always higher. So, I felt that my race had something to do with it.

WALKER: Were you allowed to see your written tests ?

MATSUHARA: Well, the scores and everything, you know...

WALKER: Just the scores ?

MATSUHARA: I can't recall if we got to see the written. I think we got to see it within a certain period of time, but then, I felt that it was in my oral that they could have downgraded me down. So, I couldn't help but feel it was a matter of race.

WALKER: Were there particular individuals that you knew who were possibly doing this ? You don't have to name any names...

MATSUHARA: See, I had asked that I be placed in the Adult Division. This was my preference. Most of my time

MATSUHARA: with the Probation Department, I was with the Adult Division.

Then, I spent about nine months or so working with the juvenile court system. When I'd write reports recommending to the judge about what to do with either the juveniles or with the adults, I'd really call them as I saw the case. There were times that I felt very strongly about recommending a certain way, and then the Supervisor wouldn't see it my way, and, we'd have a little squabble about that.

I know one situation where we were discussing a case report that I had written when I was working with a juvenile. I felt very strongly that this particular juvenile had enough chances on probation. What he did was something that warranted him going to the Youth Authority. When I recommended that, the Supervisor, and the one above him, openly came out and said, "Hey ! Bill, are you crazy ?" I said, "No, I'm not, this is is the way I feel about it. I should get a better feeling about how this person is, because I'm the one that personally interviewed him. I'm the one that went to the home to see what the home situation was. You read my report, but you don't know the other details about the whole situation."

WALKER: What were the reasons they gave for overruling you ?

MATSUHARA: Well, for one thing, they felt. . . . I think finance was involved in it. If you kept them out of the state institutions, the County would get some reimbursements, so to speak. This was also true in the adult situation. Later on, if you kept them from going to prison, and kept them at the County level, then the County would realize some additional state funds. I couldn't see, within my own heart, why should somebody be considered for probation, rather than to be sent to prison, if he wasn't deserving of it. . . . that there was absolutely no hope of rehabilitating the guy in a probation program ?

Eventually, they moved me out of the court unit (where I did the recommending), to a job that was more clerical than anything else: you're taking care of a case file involving a probationer who has been moved to another County for what they call "courtesy supervision." Then, I would make suggestions that. . . . "Why don't....". . . . you know, when a person moved. . . . when a probationer went out of County, and the person who was supervising him during the time that he was in Sacramento County, would transfer the case to my case load, which would be the

MATSUHARA: out-of-town case load. All I'm doing was just paper work, asking "How's this guy doing ?," and so forth. It was a situation where I felt that my position actually wasn't necessary. In terms of economics, I felt that if the person who was supervising kept a file, and then maintained that file, this idea of transferring to a special unit, you know, a special case load, was just a drain on the taxpayers' money, so to speak. I would have hassles about that.

I got tired of some of the procedures that the administration was bringing up. I would say, "Gee, that's not going to work out," or, "This is a better way to maintain it" (in a certain way.) But, they wouldn't consider it. You tried their new system, and they'd have to revert back to the old system, or whatever suggestions that I had put forth. So, I was having a constant battle, so to speak, with my superiors.

Some of the jobs that I had to do, I didn't think that. . . . I thought that I could do a better job. . . . be more of a benefit to the Department. . . . doing something else. So eventually, I got tired of it, so I said, "I'm going to retire." That was the extent of it.

WALKER: If we can go back to 1946, now, for a minute. . . . how long did you wait, after you got back to Sacramento, before you married, and began to have a family ?

MATSUHARA: Let's see. . . .'46. . . . we got married. . . . April. . . . April of '47. April 27th. When we got married, we rented a flat that my brother-in-law owned, which was just around the corner from where my folks lived. Both my wife and I were working for the state.

Our first child, Colleen, was born August 4th, 1950. . . . I'm not much on dates...

WALKER: What was your wife doing for the state ?

MATSUHARA: She was a stenographer.

WALKER: In what Department ?

MATSUHARA: She worked for the Department of Agriculture. . . . and then, she also worked for. . . . I think she mainly worked for the Department of Agriculture.

WALKER: She had that job before you came back, then ?

MATSUHARA: Let's see. . . . she was working. . . . I think she was working, yeh. And then, later on, she went to the Department of Education. What year I can't recall. But, she retired when she was working for the

MATSUHARA: Department of Education. In fact, I told her to quit, because it was too much of a stress and strain on her. I told her it was not worth it for her to be going to work. . . . the mental stress and the physical strain and everything. It wasn't worth it, so, I figured, "Well, we can manage with just one salary (at that time), anyway."

Also, when we were living at 1921 10th Street, we were expecting our second child. We started to look for another home. . . . a larger home. That's when I encountered some problems with people who would come out and say that I'm not welcome in the neighborhood.

WALKER: Tell me a little bit about your house search. You told me in our preliminary talk that it was a problem getting a home. When you came back, you were renting, then, after your first child was born was when you went out to begin to look?

MATSUHARA: Right, unuhuh. Well, we wanted a bigger home because the flat that we were renting was actually just a three room flat: a living room that had one of those beds that you can slide out from the closet, the middle room was our bedroom, and then the kitchen,

and, a small bathroom. We didn't even have a washing machine. We did our washing in the bath tub.

That year, we bought our first car. I was one of those (I guess) one percent who'd go into a car dealer and pay the sticker price on my car.

WALKER: Where did the money come from ?

MATSUHARA: Savings. We did a lot of scrimping and saving; did without a lot of things that you would want. A matter of saving and...

WALKER: What did you look for in a car ?

MATSUHARA: Well, it was a Ford. It was a 1950 Ford. It was just the way it looked, and, it just appealed to me, so, during the lunch hour, when I was walking around, I went into the dealer and I saw that I liked it, and I said, "I want to buy it." I guess I wasn't much at haggling as to . . . you know, putting the price down, or anything like that. I looked at the sticker price, and I said, "O.K., I'll buy it," and the guy must have made the easiest sale...

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

WALKER: Tell me about the house on 42nd Street.

MATSUHARA: This house. . . . we eventually. . . . after some encounters in other areas. . . . the sales person took us to this house on 42nd Street, off 14th Avenue, and it appealed to us. It was a two bedroom home. . . . stucco. . . . with a detached garage. We thought it would be adequate for our purposes--for a family. It had a nice. . . . well, the yard was small. . . . but the house itself appealed to both Pearl and me. So, we decided to buy it under Cal Vet. I forgot what we paid for it, but. . . . as I recall, I don't think we paid more than forty two dollars a month for it. [laughter] With that kind of a low payment, of course, we felt that we could manage.

Then, after we moved in there, we had. . . . Kevin and Michael eventually came along. I told Pearl to stay home and raise the kids, rather than for her to return to work. Some of my friends, and her relatives--in fact, my brother--would have my mother, or her mother, look after their kids, but we didn't want to impose on our folks.

MATSUHARA: I felt that it was important that someone--the mother--should be staying home taking care of the kids, so I had Pearl stay home for seventeen years. Then, after the kids were in a situation where we felt that they might be able to look after each other, Pearl went back to work.

Of course, that was only a two bedroom home, and it was crowded for the three kids. We wanted to get a larger home, so we ended up buying this lot here. There were quite a few empty lots here, and even though we wanted the lot next door, we couldn't get that one, so we ended up buying this lot here.

At that time, since the payment on this house would be quite a bit larger, we had to. . . . Cal Vet didn't provide for. . . . I forgot what the amount was. . . . so, we had to put down a substantial amount to actually qualify to have the payment transferred over to this house. It was quite a substantial amount, but then we took it out of savings, and made up the difference, so that we were still on the Cal Vet on this one again. The payment was. . . . I think was. . . . beginning around sixty, seventy dollars a month, but that was because of the large down payment that we were able to put down.

MATSUHARA: This was all what we had made ! We didn't get any help from my parents or anything. I didn't want to impose on my folks. They weren't that well-off anyway.

During the time that I was in the service, I was considered kind of the head of the family, even though I was the fourth son---since my two brothers had, previous to the War, been down in San Diego. When my other brother, Howard, got married, I was considered sort of the head of the family, so I was able to get my military. . . . but you know how that works, in allotments.

They were sending allotments to my folks. So, in terms of monthly pay from the service, I wasn't getting much. I forgot what I was getting, but it wasn't too much compared to what the other guys were getting who weren't sending their pay...

WALKER: Because of your rank ?

MATSUHARA: Rank, and also because they would take so much for allotment to send to the parents. So, in terms of savings, I really had to watch my dollars and cents, so to speak.

When we moved into here, of course, all this scrimping and saving paid off, because we had saved up

MATSUHARA: enough to make up the difference in terms of the Cal Vet requirements. With the low monthly payments, we figured, "We'll survive." There's a lot of things that you may want, but you do without, you know. At least Pearl and I always can say to ourselves, "What we have here, is something that we worked for by ourselves, and we didn't have to bank on anybody else."

WALKER: How did it happen that you became the head of the family, when you had an older brother living in Sacramento ?

MATSUHARA: Well, my two older brothers eventually moved to San Diego to work as fishermen for my Uncle. So, they, in effect, were not contributing to support. My older brother, Howard. . . . of course, we went into Camp together, but then he got clearance to relocate from Tule Lake to Kansas City, Missouri. We had to get FBI clearance, and all that. . . . and be assured that you have a job. In effect, then, in Camp, I was the oldest one. . . . my two kid sisters were still there. So, that was the reason that, when I volunteered, then the segregation came up, I had to make sure that my folks were safely moved to another Relocation Center. Then, when I entered the service, I was considered the head of the family. I was able to

MATSUHARA: get an allotment--money taken from my paycheck--as an allotment to my folks.

WALKER: Did your brother come back to Sacramento when your parents moved back ?

MATSUHARA: Well, Howard, the one above me, you know, he had taken an overseas discharge. He was drafted, and he took an overseas discharge in Japan, and then his wife Ruby, who is Pearl's sister (we kind of eliminated one inlaw that way), [laughter] joined Howard in Japan, and they stayed in Japan. . . . I guess it must have been over two years. Then, Jim and Harry, of course, returned to San Diego, and they still continue to live down there.

WALKER: So, when you were discharged, Howard was in Japan ?

MATSUHARA: Right, unhuh.

WALKER: How did the old neighborhood seem to you when you came back ? Had it ceased to exist during the War?

MATSUHARA: Well, they were beginning the Redevelopment, you know. . . . tearing down some of those old sites that we knew. I felt quite sad about it because it's not the old Sacramento that I've known. In fact, it's completely different.

WALKER: Where was your parent's new home relative to where you had been living ?

MATSUHARA: Well, 906 1/2 T Street. . . . we were living on 3rd and P. So, Q-R-S-T, four blocks down this way, and from 3rd Street to between 9th and 10th...

WALKER: And the new address was no longer part of an ethnic neighborhood?

MATSUHARA: Well, not like what it was before. Before the War, it was a real strong concentration of Japanese within a certain block area there. The T Street address there. . . . there were Asians living in that area, but not as concentrated. The same was true on 42nd Street.

Let's see, after we moved there, then another. . . . two more Japanese families moved right on the same street. Then my sister-in-law moved around the corner, but eventually, they all moved out of that area. Most of the Japanese Americans are settled in the South area. You have quite a concentration off of Freeport and 35th Avenue, and then, of course, quite a few more affluent ones are moving into the Green Haven area, and "The Pocket" area--the newer sections there.

But, Old Sacramento, as I've known it, is not. . . . of course, they've done a lot of remodeling in that section of Old Town. . . . Old Sacramento. . . . but, the house that we used to live in is no longer there.

MATSUHARA: It's an apartment house, right on the corner. The place that I was born in, on N Street, is now the Sacramento Union. Then, of course, all the "red light districts" have gone. [laughter]

WALKER: What about the *Nichiren* Buddhist Church?

MATSUHARA: The *Nichiren* Buddhist Church used to be on P Street, between 3rd and 2nd. Now, they've moved down to 24th Street. They've got a real big, nice temple there.

The old Buddhist Church used to be on O Street between 4th and 5th Street. But that's been torn down. Now they're up on Riverside Boulevard and Broadway. It's a real nice temple there. And, of course, they have these other. . . . *Tenrikyo* Church, and. . . . they have quite a few Japanese Churches. . . . small Japanese Churches. . . . different Buddhist sects. . . . their ways of holding the ceremonies are a little bit different from the regular Buddhist ceremonies.

I became a Presbyterian because that's where we got married. Pearl just wouldn't get away from the church. . . . Presbyterian Church. She's been a staunch Presbyterian since she was a kid. I was kind of a drifter, drifting from one church to another, and so, when I asked her to marry me, of course, she says,

MATSUHARA: "Well, I want to get married in the Presbyterian." So, that's why I became a member of the Presbyterian Church after we got married.

WALKER: How'd it come to pass that there got to be so many new sects ?

MATSUHARA: Well, the thing about the Japanese, you know, there's too many chiefs. It seems like in business, you know, you don't find a big Japanese outfit. . . . at least here in Sacramento. Whereas you have like BelAir, Jumbo. . . . of course, they've changed a little bit now, but the Chinese seem to be able to get along business-wise, because, I guess. . . . from what I gather. . . . they can say, "This person's the boss. . . . he's going to run it." Whereas, the Japanese. . . . amongst the Japanese. . . . they always seem to have a tendency: "Well, I'm the boss too," and so...

WALKER: Why don't you think that happened before the War ?

MATSUHARA: Well, even before the War there weren't. . . . well, of course, they had their limitations in terms of how big they could get. But, it seems to be a characteristic, sad to say, that the Japanese didn't seem to be able to evaluate each other and say, "Well, this guy's the best man, let him run it." In a lot of situations it was a

matter of too many guys who wanted to be the boss, or, who had different ideas. . . . I don't know, it just seems to be kind of a trait amongst. . . . you know...

WALKER: Well, now, a neighborhood isn't just the buildings---it's also the people. How many of the old gang that you knew before the War were still around ? Did you have the impression that most of them were gone, and your friends were all new ?

MATSUHARA: Well, no. Most of the people who were old-time Sacramentans did come back. But then, others who. . . . reestablished themselves, like in Chicago. There's quite a few, not only from Sacramento, but from other areas in the Pacific Coast. When they relocated, they decided to stay in Chicago. Let's see, Chicago and where else. . . . Salt Lake City, I guess, and Denver...

WALKER: These are places where you have friends to the present time that you once knew in Sacramento ?

MATSUHARA: Right. And interestingly, there are friends that we have now, that we never knew before the War. But they were living in Chicago. One family decided to come to Sacramento because he used to work for Sears and in their studies of some of the places in the United States where it's most appropriate in terms of climate,

cost of living, weather, and so forth, he found out that Sacramento County was one of the better ones. So, he came here. We eventually became friends through a dancing class. Then, he, in turn, started to tell people who were retiring in Chicago, "Come to Sacramento." So there's about seven families that, you know, retired in Chicago, never lived in Sacramento before they came here to live, and primarily because of housing. . . . cost of housing, cost of living. . . . weather-wise. . . . so, it was quite interesting. We call them the "Chicago Connection." [laughter]

WALKER: So, you'd say it's maybe about half and half then. . . . people that you've known in the past, and people that...

MATSUHARA: Yeh.

WALKER: How long was it, after you'd come back from the War, before you felt you were really "back?" That things were on their way. . . . where the future looked like you knew where it was developing, and it seemed like things were taking a positive direction?

MATSUHARA: That's kind of hard for me to figure--when was the best time. This feeling, you know, of being totally accepted. . . . I don't think that I can always get a feeling that I'm totally accepted. More so, too,

MATSUHARA: because right now you have "Japan-bashing." The public don't realize that we're as American as anybody else, but because of our physical traits, there's always a feeling of, "Here's another Jap." If some Asian gets into trouble, or something or other. . . . we're still not totally accepted. So, we have to be careful about "Japan-bashing" having a repercussion amongst the Americans of Japanese ancestry.

This is one of the reasons I like to get active with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Because this is one way of educating the population that we're good Americans. For this reason. . . . like yesterday, we marched in the downtown parade, and whenever there's a parade. . . . if they ask if we want to be in a parade, we always say. . . . the Post says, "O.K.," and so, some of us will go out and parade.

WALKER: Can you think of specific instances that happened to you over the years, where you were put on notice that you were kind of on the outside?

MATSUHARA: Well, the experiences I've had at work, looking for homes. . . . then, even when I'm talking with some of the people of other races, you know, every now and then, somebody will slip and that derogatory "J-A-P"

comes out. Then, you get a feeling, "Gee, maybe outwardly he may be O.K., but maybe deep inside he may still have that feeling."

WALKER: In situations even when they knew you were of Japanese ancestry ?

MATSUHARA: Right !

WALKER: Did your children come home with complaints of. . . . mentions of incidents ?

MATSUHARA: Well, they haven't mentioned it. . . . of course, the *sanseis* (the 3rd generation), have assimilated a little bit more than we had. Like, you know, the intermarriage. So, this has helped them along, I think. Whereas, in our days, you wouldn't think of marrying outside your racial group.

WALKER: How do you feel about it for your. . . . for the *sansei* ?

MATSUHARA: For the *sansei* ? I think it's good for them. . . . the fact that they can get along in the community. See, before the War, most of our activities were within our own racial group. If you drifted away from there, you're just being like a loner, so to speak. The idea of belonging. . . . but then, this doesn't apply. Maybe it's a sad situation, because. . . . that's why the *sanseis* are drifting away, a little bit

MATSUHARA: more than the *niseis*. They're not as culturally oriented as we were, which, I think, is kind of sad, in a way.

WALKER: What's available for them now?

MATSUHARA: Well, if they want to, they have these Japanese language schools, but, then, you don't find. . . . like my kids. . . . they didn't think of going to a Japanese language school. They have other things. . . . they'd rather be going water skiing--skiing, or, some other thing.

WALKER: How do you feel about that?

MATSUHARA: Well, I feel. . . . it's their choice. . . . it's their life. So, I don't intervene and say, "Hey you better..." Of course, they're adults now, and you don't. . . . after they got out of high school, the choice was theirs. If they needed help, we were willing to help them. But, in terms of trying to run their lives, you know, my feeling, and Pearl's feeling, has been, "They've got to learn to stand on their own two feet." But, any time they need help, you know, they can count on us.

We hear from my daughter. Usually, she calls us on Saturday or Sunday. My two sons check with us to see if we're O.K. And holiday's we make it a point to have

MATSUHARA: dinner here, and Pearl will cook, and they'll come. Colleen usually makes a short visit during Christmas time. She gets a few days off from her job as Assistant Coach. Either Christmas time, or during the Summer time, she'll be able to come up for a short while.

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

WALKER: Mr. Matsuhsara, we were talking about your children, and their experiences, and your relationship to them. Can you tell us a little bit each one of your children--where they went to school, and what they've been doing for the last twenty years?

MATSUHARA: My daughter, Colleen, graduated from Sac State. She has always been interested in athletics. She has been quite active with the *sansei* group in basketball tournaments. She's very good about organizing events.

After she graduated from Sac State--also, she went to City College and she played softball and basketball and volleyball (in spite of her short stature, she got on the varsity of Sac State. . . . she was a point guard)--after she graduated, I don't know how, but. . . . I know. . . . she met someone in Los Angeles who was quite influential in the basketball program in Southern California. I think he was the one that referred her to the Assistant Coach's job at Cal State Fullerton. The head coach there was Billie Moore, who was. . . . who eventually became the. . . . what year, I forgot what year it was. . . . she was the Olympic Basketball Coach. . . . Women's

MATSUHARA: Basketball Coach. . . . and she hired Colleen as Assistant Coach.

Then, when Billie Moore was given the job as Head Coach at UCLA, Colleen could have stayed at Fullerton and become the Head Coach, but since Billie Moore asked her to be Assistant Coach at UCLA, Colleen took the job as Assistant Coach at UCLA. So, that same year when Colleen and Billie Moore were involved in the basketball program at UCLA, they were able to get the National Championship for women's basketball (which was quite a feather in the cap, for both Billie and Colleen.) Then she stayed there about three years or so. Usually, she stays in one place for about three or four years.

She got a job at the University of Nebraska as Head Women's Basketball Coach. So, she went there and worked as Head Women's Basketball Coach at Nebraska. She always used to write and say how terrible the weather was there, and she longed for the sunshine of California. [laughter]

She got along real well with Judy Holland, who was the Woman's Athletic Director at UCLA, and Judy asked her to come back to UCLA, as Assistant Athletic Director for the Women's Program. So, inasmuch as she

MATSUHARA: was quite fed up with all the cold weather in Nebraska, Colleen returned to California, and accepted the job as Assistant Women's Athletic Administrator. I think she worked under that position about three years, or somewhere along there.

But, she yearned for the action on the basketball court, and she was tired of the office work, so the University of Texas heard about Colleen's ability and everything, and they asked her to take a job at Texas as Assistant Basketball Coach. So, she went to Texas (at Austin, Texas), and, there again, her first year there, [laughter] fortunately, they won the National Championship again. Seems like everywhere she went, the Championship followed her, you know. Then she stayed at Texas for three years. We had hoped that she would stay there, because we enjoyed taking yearly trips to Austin, Texas, and she had a real nice thing going there.

But then, last year, Notre Dame contacted her, and they offered her a job. It was an Assistant Coach's job, but I guess the offer was good, and, she thought it was time for her to be moving along, so she took the job at Notre Dame. We thought she would stay there at least 3 years, or so, but, surprisingly, in

MATSUHARA: the meantime, Long Beach State wanted her. They asked permission from Notre Dame if they could interview her, and so she went to Long Beach State, and she told us, "Well, I've got a new job again."

That's where she is now: Long Beach State. She seems to be quite happy there. She's Assistant Basketball Coach, and also the Chief Recruiting Coordinator, so, she does a lot of traveling to recruit new players for Long Beach State.

WALKER: Now, you said earlier that you were very much involved with basketball--especially before the War. How much credit do you think you can take for her accomplishment?

MATSUHARA: Well, in terms of sports, you know, I was always interested in sports. When all my kids were still young, I decided to coach them in basketball, beginning from eight years old. We had a community church basketball league that I got my kids involved in. That's where they got their skills and knowledge about basketball.

Usually, the rule was, you had to be nine years old, but because I was coaching. . . . [laughter] So, when they were eight years old, they started to play basketball. They all stayed in the basketball

MATSUHARA: program throughout their school years. And that accounts for all these trophies [gestures toward his mantelpiece, which is festooned with many trophies of all sizes] and everything here.

Also, I was Commissioner of the Sacramento Community Church Basketball League, for seven years. Or, a little longer...

WALKER: During what years?

MATSUHARA: Let's see. . . . it's one of those up here. . . . [he goes to look at his trophies] My involvement with the community basketball program stayed with the kids. Actually, Colleen is the only one that has gone on, you know. Basketball is her life work.

My first son, Kevin. . . . I have to tell you [laughter]. . . . after he graduated from high school, he went to Sac State. He was a real hard worker, and he'd get different kinds of odd jobs. He used to be janitorial work for Jerry Lewis' Theater. It's been closed, but there was a theater right close to home, there. He'd go after the movies were closed to clean up the place, and he really scrimped and saved in terms of his money.

WALKER: While he was in college?

MATSUHARA: Yeh, right. Then, while still going to school. . . .

there used to be a massage parlor on Fruitridge Road, right off of Freeport Boulevard, and they wanted somebody to stay there and sort of manage it, and I told him, "That's not the most conducive place to be working." But, he said, "Well, it's the easiest job, because, all you do is stay there, make sure that everything's running along fine, and that there are no problems." He said that it gave him the opportunity to study, because there wasn't much to do.

So, even though we didn't quite approve of him working in the place. . . . a massage parlor. . . . the money was there, and it gave him an opportunity to study. So, he took that job, and stayed there until the guy who ran the place wanted to sell the place. So, he bought into the place, and. . . . of course, we were quite concerned, you know, because it wasn't the kind of a place you want your own son, or daughter, to be working, but. . . . he considered that he could handle it, without any problems, and so forth. Then, when they started having a hassle about some of these massage parlors being sort of a place of ill-repute,

MATSUHARA: then he decided to sell out. . . . which he did. . . . which we were glad to hear.

Then, later on, he got into. . . . he's probably the only Asian male stripper. So, he became a male stripper.

WALKER: Has he spent a lot of time lifting weights ?

MATSUHARA: Right, unhuh. He's really physically fit. He's a physical fitness nut, so to speak.

Now, he has his own group called the "Night Owls." He performs. . . . he, or his group. . . . in fact, he schedules all the parties, and so forth, for himself, or his group. They perform. . . . like in Stockton. . . . Grass Valley. . . . Chico. . . . all over. . . . throughout the northern part of California. He goes to Oregon. He's been Alaska. I understand they wanted him in Australia, but he couldn't make the trip. Apparently, he's quite well-known. He goes under the name of "Shaun Brandon Lee."

He's advertised in the Yellow Pages, and I guess he's doing quite well in that business. I keep telling him, "What are you going to do when you get too darn old to be doing it ?" He says, well, he can be the agent for the group. It's a legitimate

MATSUHARA: business. He makes sure there's no "hanky-panky." He says it's better than being on welfare, or on drugs, or being an alcoholic. I can trust him, that what he's doing is strictly "on the up and up." Those that work under him, if they do anything wrong, he just cuts them off, and tells them, "You're no longer working for me."

It's like some of these singing telegrams, and so forth. It's what people want, and, so long as he keeps it legitimate, and nothing shady about it. Of course, it's not like telling your folks and other people, "Well my son's a doctor, or a lawyer." I have had, some people, when I tell them, "My son's a stripper," they seem a little aghast. In fact, I belong to this dance club of *niseis*. . . . includes also Chinese Americans...

WALKER: Is this traditional dancing, or ballroom dancing ?

MATSUHARA: Ballroom dancing. . . . and when some people ask me what my son does, I tell them, "Well, he just makes a bare living." They don't catch on. When they seem a little puzzled, I say, "Well, he makes a bare living, he's a stripper. . . . male stripper," then they catch on. There are some people who I find that they're not as friendly to me after I told them that my son is a

MATSUHARA: stripper. Whereas others will say, "Well, that's fine." They're broad-minded ones. They don't seem to mind. They say, "Well, that's fine, as long as he's making a good living." But there are couples who frown upon the fact that I have a son who is a male stripper.

Then, my younger son, went to State College...

WALKER: What's his name ?

MATSUHARA: Michael. You notice that all my children have Irish first names. The reason for that is because, when I was young, one of my idols was a Notre Dame player named Kevin O'Shea. That's why I gave my son. . . . our first son. . . . the name Kevin. Then, the fact that I was interested in Notre Dame--the Irish, you know--that's where I got Colleen and Kevin...

WALKER: Have you been a Notre Dame fan for a long, long time ?

MATSUHARA: Yeh. I've been a fan for all these years. I always kid people that I'm half Irish, you know, the "-hara" part. . . . Matsu-hara.

WALKER: What was it that appealed to you about Notre Dame ?

MATSUHARA: It's just like. . . . I don't know. . . . it just appealed to me. . . . just like the New York Yankees. It's always appealed to me. So, come hell or high

MATSUHARA: water, whether up or down, I've always been a loyal follower, so to speak.

WALKER: Do you like green ?

MATSUHARA: Well. . . . no. [laughter]

WALKER: Must be the fact that they were winners for a long time ?

MATSUHARA: Winners. . . . and of course. . . . it was just something about them that appealed to me. . . . you know, their competitive nature. I've always liked, to be competitive, and so they fascinated me.

Well, Mike, went to State College also. I think he was close to graduation, and then he said he was going to quit school and go to work. We tried to convince him to at least stay and get his degree...

WALKER: What was he majoring in ?

MATSUHARA: I think he was majoring in Social Science. Initially, he wanted to be a dentist. Then, for some reason, he decided he didn't want to be a dentist any more. Then, he went into Social Science. He was a few units away from graduation and he decided that he wanted to quit, and started going to work.

He worked as a soda jerk at one of these ice cream parlors. While he was there, because he was very personable and got along well with everyone, someone

MATSUHARA: from a supermarket asked him if he wanted a job. He started to work for the Jumbo Markets (they're quite a large chain store). The Jumbo Markets at that time, were primarily run by Chinese, but they had Caucasian "higher-ups," so to speak. Mike started working for them first, as a courtesy clerk, or something like that, and then went up to regular clerk. Then, he worked up to head clerk, then Assistant Manager.

Later on, Albertson's asked if he wanted to work for them. So, he's now working at Albertson's Supermarket. Apparently, they considered him quite highly in terms of his work. He was sent to Idaho for a short training period, to become, instead of Assistant Manager (they call him Assistant Director). So, he went to this session where the prospective Store Directors turn out. He went there a year or two ago, but, he's still an Assistant Director now. We keep wondering, "when's he going get a store of his own ?"

He did have one opportunity to be a Director, but at that time, he said he'd like a little bit more time to be trained as a Director. So, he said, in all fairness to the chain (to Albertson's), that he wasn't quite ready to be a Director. He could have actually

MATSUHARA: taken it, and maybe tried to struggle through it, but he wanted to be honest with them and told them, "I'm not quite ready yet. I want to be Assistant Director and learn a little bit more, be a little more assured about the grocery business." So, now, we kind of wonder, "Gee, maybe he should have taken it," but, he feels that he's happy where he is. Eventually, he hopes. . . . he thinks that he might be able to get a store of his own.

WALKER: What about your grandchildren ?

MATSUHARA: No grandchildren. One coming up. Michael. . . . he's been going around with this Brenda. . . . Brenda Amos. . . . she's a Caucasian. . . . and Michael won a trip to Hawaii, and so, he took Brenda with him. Before he left, he asked, "Would you be disappointed if we decided to get married in Hawaii ?" By golly, when they were in Hawaii, the day before his birthday, October 13th, last year, they got married in Hawaii.

He said they didn't want to go through the hassle of all the invitations and all the things that go along with the wedding. . . . all the heavy expenses and everything. He didn't want us to get involved in trying to pay for the reception and everything. They built a house in Roseville, and he felt that whatever

MATSUHARA: they can save from going through the expense of all the elaborate weddings, and so forth. . . . they'd rather be paying for the house. We felt, well, that's what they want. We'll comply with their wishes.

So, we didn't have any reception or anything. They had a small reception that Brenda's friends had kind of put together, you know, for a very small group. But, our relatives always ask, "When's he having his reception?"

The thing that always ticks me off is, all these years, when they have something going for their kids, we always made sure that we gave them gifts. When they got married, when they had their babies, when they were moving into a new house, we always made sure that we gave them something. Whether we were able to go, or not, we gave it to them. It's been quite frustrating to know that when Michael got married, none of our relatives. . . . they always think, "No reception, no gifts." Even in terms of the new house, they never gave them a housewarming gift or anything.

I told Mike, "If you have a housewarming party, it's like you're saying, 'come on over'. It's just like asking for a gift. If they want to give you a gift out of their own heart, they should go along

MATSUHARA: there and say, 'Here's a gift for you.'" That's my feeling. Mike kind of feels that way, and that "I don't want to be throwing a housewarming party, just to be getting a gift." So, that's one of the sore spots in our family situation. . . . amongst the brothers and sisters.

WALKER: Do your children have any relations with their cousins ?

MATSUHARA: Well, when they have a wedding they're invited. They attend and give them gifts, and so forth.

But, the gifts that they have received were from their friends with whom he played basketball. Also, they have received gifts from friends of Pearl and me.

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

WALKER: Mr. Matsuura, we've been talking about your children and your family life. I wonder if I could ask you about the kinds of organizations you belong to? I know that you're a member of the VFW *Nisei* Post. You mentioned awhile ago that you belong to a ballroom dance club. Are there other organizations that you also belong to--whether for service purposes, or for recreation?

MATSUHARA: Well, I'm a member of the Parkview Presbyterian Church. In my younger years, I used to even teach Sunday School. I was an elder of the church, and was quite involved in the church program. I also coached for the church basketball team. I also was quite involved with church activities. More recently, I've kind of sloughed off on it.

In addition to the church program, I belong to the Sacramento Japanese American Citizen's League, but this is an organization that I haven't really taken an active part in--I'm just a dues-paying member.

WALKER: Why is that?

MATSUHARA: Well, when I become involved in some organization. . . . well, I'm more involved with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. . . . so it's a matter of time. . . . how much time I'll be spending away from home, and everything. So, for that reason, I'm just a dues-paying member of the Japanese American Citizen's League.

WALKER: Have you any disagreements with their political views?

MATSUHARA: Well, they don't seem to be doing enough for. . . . well, the things that they get involved with are things that don't quite appeal to me.

WALKER: For example...

MATSUHARA: Well, like recently they had a Halloween party for kids, which is nice. But, I figure, "Gee, there are hungry people out there. Why can't they use that money to help the hungry people, instead of having a party for kids who come from families who are affluent, and really don't miss it." Of course, I don't tell them that they shouldn't be having it. . . . the Halloween party. . . . but I would think that, "Gee, why don't they consider those

MATSUHARA: things: homeless people and hungry people, who would benefit far more."

Then, in terms of. . . . like with the Redress. . . . you know what I'm talking. . . . Redress situation ?¹ I think the Florin JACL were more active along that line. So, I have more admiration for the Florin JACL, than I do for the Sacramento JACL. But, because I'm a member of the Sacramento JACL. . . . and then, from the same token. . . . I often wonder. . . . Pearl's niece. . . . she's a pharmacist, who later went to law school and became an attorney, and strangely, the practice that she took over here in Sacramento, was that of an attorney who was quite prominent and active in the Sacramento JACL. And, the Sacramento JACL never asked her about becoming a member. In the meantime, Florin JACL asked her, so she says, "Well, gee, Sacramento didn't ask me". . . . so she accepted Florin JACL. Those are things that kind of bother me, "Well, gee, why didn't Sacramento ask her," you know.

1. Payments from the U.S. Government to every Japanese American who was placed in a Relocation Center during World War II. These were mandated by the Civil Liberties Act of 1987 and begun in 1990.

MATSUHARA: Let's see, the *Tsubaki* Dance Club is a dance club that we meet once a month, on the second Saturday of each month. It's strictly a social club. We do ballroom dancing.

Then, also, every Monday night, we go to a dance class at the Clunie Club House. That's taught by Rudy. . . . can't think of his last name. But, we go once a week for one hour--from seven to eight to the dance class.

Then, on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, the VFW holds a dance session at the *Nisei* Hall. I used to belong to the *Nisei* Hall Board. This is the Hall Board composed of members from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and also members of the Japanese American Citizen's League. We maintain the *Nisei* Memorial Hall, located on 4th Street, between O and P. We have to make sure that the building is O.K.

I was a member of that. . . . I guess it's been a good 4 or 5 years. We alternate around every two years.

Then, let's see now, I'm also a member of the *Hakayama-ken Jinkai*, but that's just a dues-paying organization that I belong to. It's an organization for those people whose ancestral background relates

MATSUHARA: back to *Hakayama-ken*. Like I said, I'm just a dues-paying member: five dollars a year for both of us.

WALKER: Is this a regional, or a national organization?

MATSUHARA: No, this is within Sacramento. I presume that other cities have their own *Hakayama-ken Jinkai*, but I don't know what the membership is. It's quite a large membership.

In any event, their function, more or less, is. . . . like when they have funerals. . . . they take over. I won't say "take over". They're willing to help with. . . . I don't know if you're familiar with what they call *koden*? *Koden* is where the Japanese. . . . when you attend a funeral, you usually bring money in an envelope to help defray the expenses. So, it may vary from five, ten, twenty dollars, depending upon how well you know the deceased. This is a cultural practice that's been passed along all these years from *isseis*, *niseis*, now even to *sanseis*. This *koden* giving is one cultural thing that's real nice in terms of helping the deceased's family. They may not "need the money," so to speak, but then, it's just a practice that's been kept along.

WALKER: What are the other benefits of membership?

MATSUHARA: Well, when you're sick, or something, they give *omimai*. *Omimai* means a gift. . . . a "visitation gift." One of the practices about the Japanese is this: you get a gift, and you make a monetary donation back to it. Like, VFW. . . . if it's a member that's sick, or in an accident, or something. . . . the Chaplain will make a visitation, and give a gift certificate for twenty dollars or something. Then, the recipient, in turn, after he gets well, usually donates thirty, or forty, or fifty dollars. You try to tell him, "Well, this is a gift from the Post, don't worry about giving back." But, because it seems customary that the Japanese return something after he gets something, they always donate back.

The same thing is with the deceased, you know. When the VFW donates flowers, or something, then the deceased's family, in turn, would donate so much money back. And, if it's over a hundred dollars or more, then we place it in a scholarship fund that we give every year. So, there are a lot of these things about Japanese customs that we still seem to have an inclination to keep up.

WALKER: Are there *sansei* members?

MATSUHARA: Oh, yes. They seem to all kind of keep drifting in. And, of course, we need the new blood, so to speak.

I also belong to the Sacramento County Retired Employees Association. But, I rarely go to those luncheon meetings. I used to go, but then I've missed the meeting for a long time now.

I also belong to the Seniors In Retirement Society, for which I attend a luncheon meeting, once a month. This is an organization I enjoy quite a bit, because of the fellowship. It's primarily Caucasians. The branch that I belong to, I was the first *nisei* to join. I used to be on the waiting list that my brother-in-law belonged to, but that branch had such a long waiting list. . . . too many of them. . . . so, out of that Branch 42, they decided to make a Branch 93.

After I joined, eight other *niseis* eventually joined. One of the things that I like about the group is that every month, on the third Friday of each month, we take a bus trip to either Reno or Tahoe. That's one of the things both Pearl and I look forward to. Of course, they have interesting speakers at the luncheon.

MATSUHARA: Then, I belong to another retired people's association: *Nisei In Retirement Society*. This is patterned quite similarly to the Seniors In Retirement Society. We meet once a month. We meet at a Japanese Restaurant and we have a Japanese meal, and also, a speaker, at these luncheon meetings.

WALKER: Who usually speaks in English ?

MATSUHARA: Yeh. Right, unhuh. They might talk about flood control, or insurance, or retirement, social security, or whatever the interest might be.

I learned how to bowl five years ago. It was a choice between bowling and golf, and I chose bowling. I belong to this bowling league. We used to call it the Golden Ones. Now they refer to it as the Young At Heart. I enjoy the fellowship there.

Also, I belong to the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 3, here in Sacramento. I'm a life member, but I haven't gone to any of their meetings. I qualified to be a member of DAV primarily because of my disability, which I incurred when I was in the service. I have a lower spine injury that I incurred on one of my parachute jumps.

WALKER: On Okinawa ?

MATSUHARA: No, when I was practice jumping in Japan. I was able to get compensation for it. But, I have yet to go to their meetings. They're always asking for donations in terms of service officer's fee, fund raiser, or whatever fund raising that they have. That's about all the main things that I'm involved in, in terms of activities.

WALKER: O.K. In summary, what do you think you might have done differently in your life ?

MATSUHARA: Well, one thing, I think, more than anything else, is, I would have put up more fuss when they wanted to put me in Camp. But at that time, who was thinking about civil rights ? When I reflect back, I wonder, "Doggone, why didn't they have such movements as Civil Rights in those days," and I always think, "Doggone it, I would have really put up a stink about throwing me in Camp."

Also, the idea of having to undergo curfew, you know. . . . be at home by eight o'clock. Of course, I wasn't complying with it because I was out even after eight o'clock. I went to see Pearl and my folks used to worry about me possibly

MATSUHARA: getting caught. But, I think that I was a little bit more of a radical than most *niseis* in terms of my thinking.

WALKER: How many of your friends had guns, and do you think they would actually have been willing to get together and resist by force?

MATSUHARA: I don't think it was ever the idea. . . . like we didn't own guns, or anything, you know. At least, I didn't. My brothers and my folks didn't, but, as to my friends owning guns, I don't know if they owned guns. I don't think that they would go out trying to shoot somebody or anything, but I know there was a lot of resentment about the JACL (Japanese American Citizen's League) saying, "Well, we gotta cooperate, and go peacefully to Camp." There was a lot of resentment about that.

For that reason, some people still have bad feelings about becoming a member of the JACL. You wonder, "Gee, why didn't they do something to keep us out of going to Camp." That's one of my main things that I always think about. If I had to live it over again, that's what I would like to. . . . like the few that did, you know, resist going into

MATSUHARA: Camp and were thrown into prison. I have to admire them for what they did.

WALKER: What would you do to change things now?

MATSUHARA: Well, I'd really like to see the people get along. . . . people get to understand each other more--in terms of culture, and their feelings, and everything. I often wonder, "Gee, when we were kids. . . . the kids get along real good. . . . but it's only when they grow older, that they seem to realize, 'oh, this guy's a little different, we'd better treat him a little differently.'" I often wonder, "Why can't more time be spent so that this feeling that the kids have of trusting each other when they're young. . . . why it can't be nurtured through adulthood ?" And then, if they do, we wouldn't have all this hatred, fighting, and everything that always seems to persist after adulthood. Those are some of my dreams: to be able to get along with another fellowman.

WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Matsuhsara. You've a very interesting life and family.

[End Session 2, November 16, 1990]

[End Tape 4, Side B]

Names List

1. Otokichi Matsuhsara (1879-1956)--father of interviewee
2. Riye (Ono) Matsuhsara (1891-1969)--mother of interviewee
3. Isamu Jim Matsuhsara (1912-)--1st child of #1 & 2
4. Toshio Harry Matsuhsara (1913-)--2nd child of #1 & 2
5. Saburo Howard Matsuhsara (1919-)--3rd child of #1 & 2
6. Toshiko (Matsuhsara) Takehara (1926-)--5th child of #1 & 2
7. Tom Takehara--husband of #6
8. Yoko Alice Matsuhsara (1928-81)--6th child of #1 & 2
9. William Bening--landlord of Matsuhsara family, 1920s-1941
10. Mrs. Georgina Wolff--YWM's Supervisor at the State Dept. of Employment, 1941-42
11. Motosuke Tsuida--husband of sister of #2; operated tuna boat in San Diego
12. Pearl (Masuda) Matsuhsara--wife of YWM
13. General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964)--Supreme Allied Commander, Southwest Pacific, World War II Army in the Pacific, World War II
14. Brigadier General Franklin Dorn--Commander, 11th Airborne Division, US Army, Japan, 1945-46
15. Colleen Matsuhsara (1950-)--oldest child YWM & #12
16. Billie Moore--US Women's Basketball Coach, 1984 Olympics; Head Coach, Women's Basketball, UCLA
17. Judy Holland--Director of Women's Athletics, UCLA
18. Kevin Matsuhsara (1953-)--2nd child of YWM & #12
19. Michael Matsuhsara (1957-)--3rd child of YWM & #12